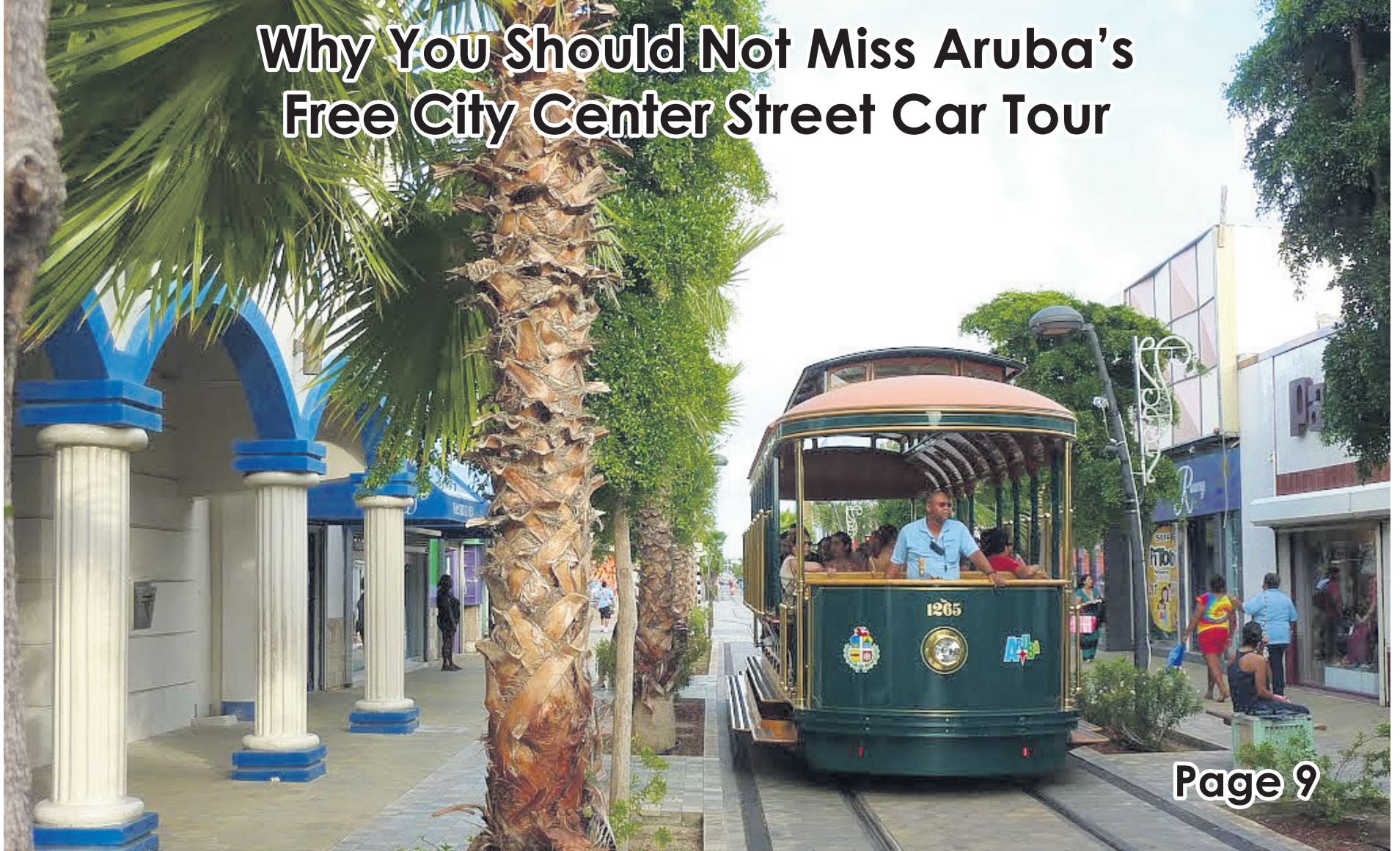



Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour



Page 9

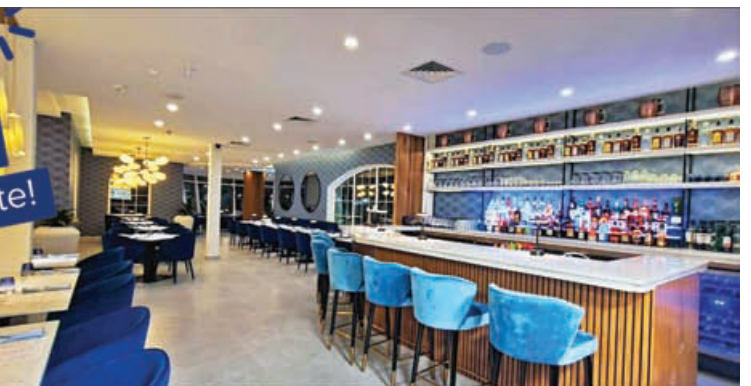


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Democrats stick with Schumer as leader. Their strategy for countering Trump is far less certain

By **MARY CLARE JALONICK**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats reelected Chuck Schumer as party leader on Tuesday as the party moves into a deeply uncertain time, with no real consensus on a strategy as President-elect Donald Trump prepares to take office.

Schumer faced no opposition in the party leadership elections, in which Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin was also reelected to the No. 2 spot and Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar became the new No. 3. In a statement, Schumer, of New York, said he was honored to move the party forward "during this crucial period for our country."

"Our preference is to secure bipartisan solutions wherever possible and look for ways to collaborate with our Republican colleagues to help working families," Schumer said. "However, our Republican colleagues should make no mistake about it, we will always stand up for our values." While Schumer remains popular with his colleagues, it is a bleak moment for Senate Democrats, who had been



Senators, from left, Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of N.Y., Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., and Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., gather after Senate Democratic leadership elections for the next session of Congress on Capitol Hill, Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

hopeful that they could hold the majority for the third election in a row. Instead they lost four seats and will be in the minority, 53-47, as Trump takes office and pressures the Senate to quickly confirm his Cabinet nominees. Unlike eight years ago, when

opposition to Trump's narrow election win fueled enthusiasm in their party, Democratic lawmakers and many of their voters are exhausted and looking for answers. So far, Democrats have stayed relatively quiet on Trump's nominees and plans

for office — a stark contrast from the loud opposition to Trump when he was elected eight years ago. Schumer has declined to comment on specifics of any nominees, instead allowing Republican reaction to dominate the conversation. On Monday,

Schumer wrote a public letter to South Dakota Sen. John Thune, the incoming Republican majority leader, asking him to resist Trump's pressure to allow him to appoint some of his nominees without a Senate vote and to insist on full FBI background checks for all nominees. But he has said little else about Trump's upcoming presidency.

While some have been more aggressive — Washington Sen. Patty Murray, chairwoman of the Senate Health, Labor, Education and Pensions Committee, said that Trump's nomination of Robert Kennedy Jr. to lead the Health and Human Services Department is "dangerous" and "nothing short of disaster" — several Democratic senators say they are saving their strength and figuring out a focus. "Everybody's in kind of in a wait-and-see mode right now," said Nevada Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, who is part of Schumer's leadership team. "Under the previous Trump administration, there was chaos all the time, all the time. And I do think it is important to pick your battles." □



President-elect Donald Trump speaks during a meeting with the House GOP conference, Nov. 13, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **ZEKE MILLER**
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump's transition team on Tuesday

Trump team signs agreement to allow Justice to conduct background checks on nominees, staff

signed an agreement to allow the Justice Department to conduct background checks on his nominees and appointees after a weeks-long delay. The step lets Trump transition aides and future administration staffers obtain security clearances before Inauguration Day to access classified information about ongoing government programs, an essential step for a smooth transition of power. It also al-

lows those nominees who are up for Senate confirmation to face the background checks lawmakers want before voting on them.

Teams of investigators have been standing by to process clearances for Trump aides and advisers.

"This agreement with the Department of Justice will ensure President Trump and his team are ready on Day 1 to begin enacting the America

First Agenda that an overwhelming majority of our nation supported on Election Day," said Susie Wiles, Trump's designate to be White House chief of staff.

The announcement comes a week after the Trump transition team signed an agreement with the Biden White House to allow transition staff to coordinate with the existing federal workforce before taking office on Jan. 20. □

Iowa sues Biden administration for citizenship status of over 2,000 registered voters

By HANNAH FINGERHUT
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) —

Iowa officials on Tuesday sued the Biden administration for access to information on the citizenship status of more than 2,000 registered voters they had questioned in the weeks leading up to the 2024 election. The complaint details a back and forth with the federal government after state election officials checked voter rolls against a list of people who identified themselves as noncitizens with the state's Department of Transportation. The vast majority of the 2,176 names had subsequently registered to vote or voted, meaning that some of those people could have become naturalized citizens in the lapsed time.

Secretary of State Paul Pate's office requested information from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on the citizenship status of those individuals but did not get it, the complaint alleges.

Federal authorities' "failure meant that the State had to rely on the best imperfect data it had available to ensure that no Iowan's vote was canceled by an illegal, noncitizen vote," a joint statement from Pate and Attorney General Brenna Bird said.

A DHS spokesperson said in an email Tuesday that the federal agency does not comment on pending litigation but added that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have "engaged with Iowa and will continue to correspond with them directly through official channels."

Two weeks before Election Day, when early voting was already underway, Pate told county elections officials to challenge the ballots case by case by any of the named individuals and have them cast a provisional ballot instead.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa then sued Pate on Oct. 30 on behalf of four voters who are nat-



Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate shows members of Iowa's Electoral College the official ballot, at the Statehouse in Des Moines, Iowa, Dec. 14, 2020.

Associated Press

uralized citizens but were named on the list, calling into question the accuracy of the DOT's information and alleging Pate infringed upon their right to vote. Their request for a stop to the ballot challenges was denied by a federal judge on Nov. 3. It is illegal for non-U.S. citizens to vote in federal elections, but there is no evidence that it is occurring in significant numbers, though Iowa and some other states say they have identified dozens of such cases.

Some individuals in Iowa had registered to vote or voted before identifying themselves as noncitizens to the DOT, so Pate's office sent those names to law enforcement and Bird's office for investigation and potential prosecution. But Pate's critics have said even those individuals might be wrongly identified as noncitizens since the DOT data has proven unreliable.

The ACLU and ACLU of Iowa said in a statement that the state would be getting the information it needed from the federal government if it agreed not to misuse it.

"Studies, journalistic efforts, and repeated attempts by government officials in Iowa and nationally have found very few non-citizens

who have voted, out of the many millions of people who vote," the statement said. "This wasteful lawsuit isn't going to change that. State leaders should spend their time on actual problems that face our state." Pate's office has not released any additional information on the number of people who turned out to vote, whose ballots were challenged or whose citizenship status was ultimately confirmed. The Des Moines Register, based on preliminary information collected from 97 of the state's 99 counties, found at least 500 of the identified individuals proved their citizenship status and had their votes counted. □

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FBI tells telecom firms to boost security following wide-ranging Chinese hacking campaign

By **DAVID KLEPPER**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal authorities on Tuesday urged telecommunication companies to boost network security following a sprawling Chinese hacking campaign that gave officials in Beijing access to private texts and phone conversations of an unknown number of Americans. The guidance issued by the FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency is intended to help root out the hackers and prevent similar cyberespionage in the future. Officials who briefed reporters on the recommendations said the U.S. still doesn't know the true scope of China's attack or the extent to which Chinese hackers still have access to U.S. networks.

In one sign of the global reach of China's hacking efforts, the government's warning was issued jointly with security agencies in New Zealand, Australia and Canada, members of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance, which also includes the U.S. and Britain.

Dubbed Salt Typhoon by analysts, the wide-ranging cyberespionage campaign emerged earlier this year after hackers sought to penetrate the networks of multiple telecommunications companies.

The hackers used their access to telecom networks



American flags are displayed with Chinese flags on top of a trishaw on Sept. 16, 2018, in Beijing. **Associated Press**

to target the metadata of a large number of customers, including information on the dates, times and recipients of calls and texts.

The hackers succeeded in retrieving the actual audio files of calls and content from texts from a much smaller number of victims. The FBI has contacted victims in this group, many of whom work in government or politics, but officials said it is up to telecom companies to notify customers included in the first, larger group.

Despite months of investigation, the true scale of China's operation, including the total number of victims or whether

the hackers still have some access to information, is currently unknown.

The FBI has said some of the information targeted by the hackers relates to U.S. law enforcement investigations and court orders, suggesting the hackers may have been trying to access programs subject to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA. The law grants American spy agencies sweeping powers to surveil the communications of people suspected of being agents of a foreign power.

But on Tuesday, officials said they think the hackers were more broadly motivated,

hoping to burrow deeply into the nation's telecommunications systems to gain wide access to Americans' information.

The suggestions for telecom companies released Tuesday are largely technical in nature, urging encryption, centralization and consistent monitoring to deter cyber intrusions. If implemented, the security precautions could help disrupt the Salt Typhoon operation and make it harder for China or any other nation to mount a similar attack in the future, said Jeff Greene, CISA's executive assistant director for cybersecurity and one of the

officials who briefed reporters Tuesday.

"We don't have any illusion that once we kick off these actors they're not going to come back," Greene said. Several recent high-profile hacking incidents have been linked to China and what officials say is Beijing's effort to steal technical and government secrets while also gaining access to critical infrastructure such as the electrical grid.

In September, the FBI announced that it had disrupted a vast Chinese hacking operation that involved the installation of malicious software on more than 200,000 consumer devices, including cameras, video recorders and home and office routers. The devices were then used to create a massive network of infected computers, or botnet, that could then be used to carry out other cyber crimes. In October, officials said hackers linked to China targeted the phones of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump and his running mate, Sen. JD Vance, along with people associated with Democratic candidate Vice President Kamala Harris. China has rejected accusations from U.S. officials that it engages in cyberespionage directed against Americans. A message left with China's embassy in Washington was not immediately returned Tuesday. □



This Feb. 23, 2018 file photo shows cranes from the Port of Seattle in the background, airplanes are parked at a Boeing facility at Boeing Field in Seattle.

Associated Press

By **GENE JOHNSON**

Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — U.S. Immigra-

tion and Customs Enforcement can continue using a Seattle airport for chartered

U.S. can continue using Seattle airport for deportation flights, appeals court says

deportation flights, a federal appeals court ruled in a decision that rejected a 2019 local order that sought to counter then-President Donald Trump's immigration policies.

The agency has long used airports around the country to charter flights deporting hundreds of thousands of noncitizens considered lawfully removable from the U.S. But in 2019, in keeping with efforts in liberal Seattle and Washington state to resist Trump's priorities, King County Executive Dow Constantine issued an executive order

expressing concern that the deportations could constitute human rights abuses. It announced that future leases at the county airport, also known as Boeing Field, would bar operators from servicing deportation flights.

The order prompted ICE to begin using an airport in Yakima — a much farther drive from ICE's Northwest detention center in Tacoma — for the deportation flights. The U.S. sued King County in 2020, arguing that Constantine's order discriminated against the federal government by singling it

and its contractors out for unfavorable treatment, and that it violated the terms of a World War II-era contract that guarantees the federal government's right to use the airport.

U.S. District Judge Robert J. Bryan agreed, and Constantine issued a new executive order superseding his old one early last year. The new order, which was not challenged, does not purport to block deportation flights but instead prevents King County resources from aiding in the deportations beyond what federal law requires. □

Canadian minister says Trump was joking when he said Canada could become the 51st state

By ROB GILLIES

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump was joking when he suggested Canada become the 51st U.S. state during a dinner with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a Canadian minister who attended their recent dinner said Tuesday. Fox News reported that Trump made the comment in response to Trudeau raising concerns that Trump's threatened tariffs on Canada would damage Canada's economy.

LeBlanc, who attended the Friday dinner at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club, said Trump's comments were in jest.

"The president was telling jokes. The president was teasing us. It was, of course, on that issue, in no way a serious comment," LeBlanc told reporters in Ottawa. LeBlanc described it as a three-hour social evening at the president's residence in Florida on a long weekend of American Thanksgiving. "The conversation was going to be



Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau walks through the lobby of the Delta Hotel by Marriott, Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024, in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

light-hearted," he said.

He called the relations warm and cordial and said the fact that "the president is able to joke like that for us" indicates good relations.

The minister said there is no transcript.

"It wasn't a meeting in a boardroom with 10 bureaucrats keeping notes," he said. "It was a social evening and there were moments where it was entertaining and funny, and there were moments where we were able to do good

work for Canada."

Earlier last week, the Republican president-elect threatened to impose a 25% tax on all products entering the U.S. from Canada and Mexico unless they stem the flow of migrants and drugs.

Trudeau requested the meeting in a bid to avoid the tariffs by convincing Trump that the northern border is nothing like the U.S. southern border with Mexico.

Kirsten Hillman, Canada's ambassador to Washington, told The Associated Press that Trudeau was successful in getting Trump and key Cabinet nominees to understand that there is no comparison between the Canada-U.S. border and Mexico-U.S. border.

Hillman, who sat at an adjacent table to Trudeau and Trump, said Canada is ready to make new investments in border security and there are plans for more helicopters, drones and law enforcement officers.

At the dinner, Hillman said America's trade deficit with Canada was also raised. Hillman said the U.S. had a \$75 billion trade deficit with Canada last year but noted a third of what Canada sells into the U.S. is energy exports and prices have been high. □

Finnish police don't suspect criminal activity regarding damaged data cables in south of country

BERLIN (AP) — Finnish police said Tuesday that "there is no reason to suspect any criminal activity" in connection with damage to two data cables running across the land border between Sweden and Finland, saying the damage was created by excavation work.

The two cables were repaired Tuesday, a day after they were damaged, affecting 6,000 private customers and 100 businesses, a company providing digital infrastructure and data communication in Northern Europe said.

Global Connect said the internet cables were damaged in two separate places in southern Finland on Monday.

The first fiber breakage happened on Monday

morning, the other one in the afternoon.

"During the night the first of the cables was repaired, so we could restore internet to approximately 95% of all the customers," said Global Connect's spokesman in Sweden, Niklas Ekström, adding that by noon on Tuesday the second cable had also been fixed and that all customers should have internet again.

Similar cable damage happens about every couple of months, but it was unusual that two cables in the same region were damaged on the same day, Ekström told The Associated Press in a telephone interview from Stockholm.

Finland's minister of transportation and communications, Lulu Ranne, wrote on X that "authorities are

investigating the matter together with the company. We take the situation seriously."

However, on Tuesday afternoon, police in Finland put out a statement saying they had investigated both incidents and that "there is no suspicion of any criminal offense in either case, as the damages were caused by excavation work."

Police added they would not initiate a criminal investigation into either case.

The incident comes after the rupture of two data cables on the Baltic Sea bed last month. The two, one running from Finland to Germany and the other from Lithuania to Sweden, were both damaged in Swedish waters.

Finnish, Swedish and German authorities launched

investigations into that incident.

Germany's defense minister said at the time the damage appeared to have been caused by sabotage, though there is no

proof at present.

Last week, Sweden formally asked China to cooperate in explaining the rupture of the Baltic Sea data cables where a China-flagged vessel had been sighted. □



An optical fibre cable of the Swedish digital infrastructure provider GlobalConnect is being laid underground in Espoo, Finland, Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024.

Associated Press

South Korea lifts president's martial law decree after lawmakers vote against it

By KIM TONG-HYUNG

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's government early Wednesday lifted the martial law he imposed during a tense night of political drama in which troops surrounded parliament and lawmakers voted to reject military rule.

Yoon said his government withdrew military personnel following a bipartisan parliamentary vote that rejected martial law, and the measure was formally lifted around 4:30 a.m. during a Cabinet meeting.

Yoon declared martial law late Tuesday, vowing to eliminate "anti-state" forces as he struggles against an opposition that controls the country's parliament and that he accuses of sympathizing with communist North Korea.

Less than three hours later, parliament voted to lift the declaration, with National Assembly Speaker Woo Won Shik declaring that the martial law was "invalid" and that lawmakers "will protect democracy with the people."

The president's surprising move harkened back to an era of authoritarian leaders that the country has not seen since the 1980s, and it was immediately denounced by the opposition and the leader of Yoon's own party.

Police and military personnel were seen leaving the Assembly's grounds after Woo called for their withdrawal. Lee Jae-myung, leader of the liberal Democratic Party, which holds the majority in the 300-seat parliament, said the party's lawmakers will remain in the Assembly's main hall until Yoon formally lifts his order.

Woo applauded how troops quickly left the Assembly after the vote.

"Even with our unfortunate memories of military coups, our citizens have surely observed the events of today and saw the maturity of our military," Woo said.

While announcing his plan



In this photo provided by South Korea Presidential Office, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol speaks during a press briefing at the presidential office in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024.

Associated Press

to lift martial law, Yoon continued to criticize parliament's attempts to impeach his key government officials and senior prosecutors and lawmakers' "unscrupulous acts of legislative and budgetary manipulation that are paralyzing the functions of the state." Jo Seung-lae, a Democratic lawmaker, claimed that security camera footage following Yoon's declaration showed that troops moved in a way that suggested they were trying to arrest Lee, Woo and even Han Dong-hoon, the leader of Yoon's People Power Party.

Officials from Yoon's office and the Defense Ministry did not respond to requests for comment early Wednesday.

Seemingly hundreds of protesters gathered in front of the Assembly, waving banners and calling for Yoon's impeachment.

Some protesters scuffled with troops ahead of the lawmakers' vote, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or major property damage. At least one window was broken as troops attempted to enter the Assembly building. One woman tried unsuccessfully to pull a rifle away from one of

the soldiers, while shouting "Aren't you embarrassed?" Under South Korea's constitution, the president can declare martial law during "wartime, war-like situations or other comparable national emergency states" that require the use of military force to maintain peace and order. It was questionable whether South Korea is currently in such a state.

When martial law is declared, "special measures" can be employed to restrict the freedom of press, freedom of assembly and other rights, as well as the power of courts.

The constitution also states that the president must oblige when the National Assembly demands the lifting of martial law with a majority vote.

Following Yoon's announcement, South Korea's military proclaimed that parliament and other political gatherings that could cause "social confusion" would be suspended, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said. The military said anyone who violates the decree could be arrested without a warrant. In Washington, the White House said the U.S. was "seriously concerned" by the

events in Seoul. A spokesperson for the National Security Council said President Joe Biden's administration was not notified in advance of the martial law announcement and was in contact with the South Korean government.

Speaking at an event with Japan's ambassador to Washington, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, a longtime Asia diplomat, reiterated that the U.S.-South Korea alliance is "ironclad" and the U.S. would "stand by Korea in their time of uncertainty." The South Korean military also said that the country's striking doctors should return to work within 48 hours, Yonhap said. Thousands of doctors have been striking for months over government plans to expand the number of students at medical schools.

Soon after the declaration, the parliament speaker called on his YouTube channel for all lawmakers to gather at the National Assembly. He urged military and law enforcement personnel to "remain calm and hold their positions."

All 190 lawmakers who participated in the vote supported the lifting of martial law. Television footage

showed soldiers who had been stationed at parliament leaving the site after the vote.

Hours earlier, TV showed police officers blocking the entrance of the National Assembly and helmeted soldiers carrying rifles in front of the building.

An Associated Press photographer saw at least three helicopters, likely from the military, that landed inside the Assembly grounds, while two or three helicopters circled above the site. The leader of Yoon's conservative People Power Party, Han Dong-hoon, called the decision to impose martial law "wrong" and vowed to "stop it with the people." Lee, who narrowly lost to Yoon in the 2022 presidential election, called Yoon's announcement "illegal and unconstitutional."

Yoon said during a televised speech that martial law would help "rebuild and protect" the country from "falling into the depths of national ruin." He said he would "eradicate pro-North Korean forces and protect the constitutional democratic order."

"I will eliminate anti-state forces as quickly as possible and normalize the country," he said, while asking the people to believe in him and tolerate "some inconveniences."

Yoon whose approval rating has dipped in recent months has struggled to push his agenda against an opposition-controlled parliament since taking office in 2022.

Yoon's party has been locked in an impasse with the liberal opposition over next year's budget bill. The opposition has also attempted to pass motions to impeach three top prosecutors, including the chief of the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office, in what the conservatives have called a vendetta against their criminal investigations of Lee, who has been seen as the favorite for the next presidential election in 2027 in opinion polls. □



Cocktails with a Story: Caya House Brings a Unique Flavor Experience to Aruba



This season, Caya House invites guests to discover a cocktail menu that blends unique flavors from Latin America and the Caribbean into every drink. Under the direction of mixologist David Posada, each cocktail at Caya House tells a story, designed to take guests on a sensory journey that captures the vibrant essence of the region through every ingredient.

“At Caya, we believe cocktails are more than just drinks. They’re an opportunity to experience the distinctive flavors and aromas of our lands,” says David Posada, mixologist. Each cocktail is crafted with precision, combining modern and traditional techniques with exotic fruits, spices, and artisanal spirits.



Among the menu favorites are:

- **Warawara:** A refreshing mix of Caravella orancello, Sloe gin, pumpkin spice, and banana syrup, served over spear ice. This cocktail evokes the essence of autumn in the tropics.
- **Tu Corazon:** A standout drink with açai-infused cachaca and a hint of raw sugar, topped with a crisp slice of red beet for a unique, earthy finish.
- **Un Recuerdo:** A bold fusion of mezcal with tree tomato, butter infused with parmesan and shiitake, green tea cordial, and green chartreuse. Perfect for those looking for a robust, one-of-a-kind experience.

Caya House also features its signature Lulada,



made with Flor de Caña rum infused with lulo, condensed milk, and lime leather—a perfect balance of sweetness and freshness for those seeking a tropical twist.

These cocktails are part of the “Caya Experience,” with a wider variety of options for guests to explore, notes David, highlighting the creativity behind each one. With this unique offering, Caya House continues to stand out as an iconic destination for those in search of authentic Caribbean flavors in Aruba.

Caya House invites alike to enjoy this innovative cocktail menu in the heart of Palm Beach, Aruba. Each drink is a celebration of Latin-Caribbean culture and flavor!

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Infini Reopens: A Story of Resilience, Gratitude, and Renewal

After several challenging days of recovery following the severe flooding that impacted our operations, Infini by Urvin Croes is pleased to announce that we are fully open once again.

Seeing our kitchen flooded was a moment of great concern for our entire team. However, thanks to the unwavering dedication of our staff, the support of our families, friends, suppliers, and the encouraging messages from our community, we found the strength to rebuild, return stronger than ever, and do so in record time.

A Safer and More Resilient Infini

In response to this unprecedented challenge, we have implemented significant measures to ensure the safety and integrity of our restaurant moving forward. New drainage systems have been installed to effectively manage any potential future flooding, protecting our space from similar incidents.



We have also reinforced our infrastructure, including repairs to the front windows and an updated inspection protocol for critical equipment, creating a safer environment for our guests and staff alike.

These efforts are part of our unwavering commitment to excellence—not just in culinary artistry, but in the overall experience and security we provide to everyone who steps into Infini.

A New Chapter Begins

This experience has reminded

us of the power of unity and resilience. We are filled with gratitude for each and every one of you who supported us through this journey. We are thrilled to welcome you back to Infini with our new **Menu 12**, which our team has worked tirelessly to create. This exciting menu celebrates the art of gastronomy and the rich culinary heritage of Aruba and the Caribbean, all in partnership with our valued local suppliers.

However, we must note that due to the damage sustained, some of our equipment is still out of operation. This temporarily limits our ability to accommodate dietary restrictions, allergies, or preferences with the level of care we usually provide. We will inform you as soon as we are able to offer vegan options or other dietary accommodations once again. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and deeply appreciate your understanding as we continue to improve our op-



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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Lois and Dan Cavallo from Glen Cove (Long Island) NY, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "One of our daughters was married on the island in 2018. We fell in love with Aruba and its wonderful people! We come back every year right before Christmas and enjoy Aruba all decked out for the holidays! We will do this as long as we can drag our luggage through airports to One Happy Island!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐



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Fusion - Piano & Wine Bar | Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Treasure Cove
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Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts
Coming Soon: El Patio Tacos & Tequila

Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour

ORANJESTAD - Aruba's City Center Street Car - or as we call it in Dutch; "Tram van Oranjestad" - is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean. There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our "main street" has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the down town area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful

and naturally air-conditioned vehicle? The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The "I love Aruba" trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The "Tram van Oranjestad" starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center—it is free for all! □



(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when travelling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to travelling parents to list off some of the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas

Baby Beach is one of Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while

Aruba's most family-friendly beaches

their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of the Pos Chiquito city. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, fall-

ing right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach in the hotel area

Yet another highly popular beach site, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore.

Palm Island

Ok, this one is technically not a beach, but a must-visit attraction for family fun. This small water park oasis is located further down the Mangel Halto Beach and is reachable by boat. This water park offers 6 hours of fun activities, food, drinks, and a chance to see pink flamingoes up close! □



Article by Etnia Nativa

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Ponton, its view towards the Bay

Episode CCLXXXII - 282

Etnia Nativa, a one of a kind native experience opportunity, where education meets revealing entertainment, a chance to tour a mystical property made with reused materials collected by its concept developer, our top cultural columnist, vocational archaeologist, and the island's top cultural expert. Book a mind-opening encounter and dive deep in the navel of Aruba.

Today, in this weekly episode, Etnia Nativa shares a bit of the life of our white Protestant descendants who started building their houses on the hill at "Ponton", since it offered a privileged view over the whole Bay Area of Playa, also known as Pardenbaai or "Horses bay".

Entering the eighteenth century, there lived few whites, reformed Europeans on the island other than the commander with his family, few personnel in the service of the West Indian Company and some white renegades who intermarried with the native Caquetian nobles. Trade with Spanish America was increasing. As a result of this, Pardenbaai, which from a nautical strategical point of view, offered more favorable conditions compared to Commandeursbaai, the late harbour in Savaneta, this latter eclipsed as a discharging-berth for cattle. No other Europeans had yet settled on the bay proper, other than some merchants of Jewish descent who came hailing from Curaçao after the discovery of gold, and chose their residences in the vicinity of Paardenbaai, i.e. on higher ground. We can only find an Amerindian or Caquetian village occupying both sides of a small sea inlet known as Lagoen. The first stone houses were not built there until 1796 or 1797, when the first WIC battery was erected at the entrance to the bay in order to offer protection to the ships anchored there, against privateers.



In the meantime, trade activities round Paardenbaai continued to pick up quickly and, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, made the commander shift his residence to a closer and taller area, so the place Ponton became the principal dwelling-center of that current period.

Ponton offered the additional advantage of an unimpeded view southward across the bay, what today is known as Punta Brabo, whereas to the north it facilitated the commander's supervision of the Caquetian Amerindian dwellings of Noord and vicinity.

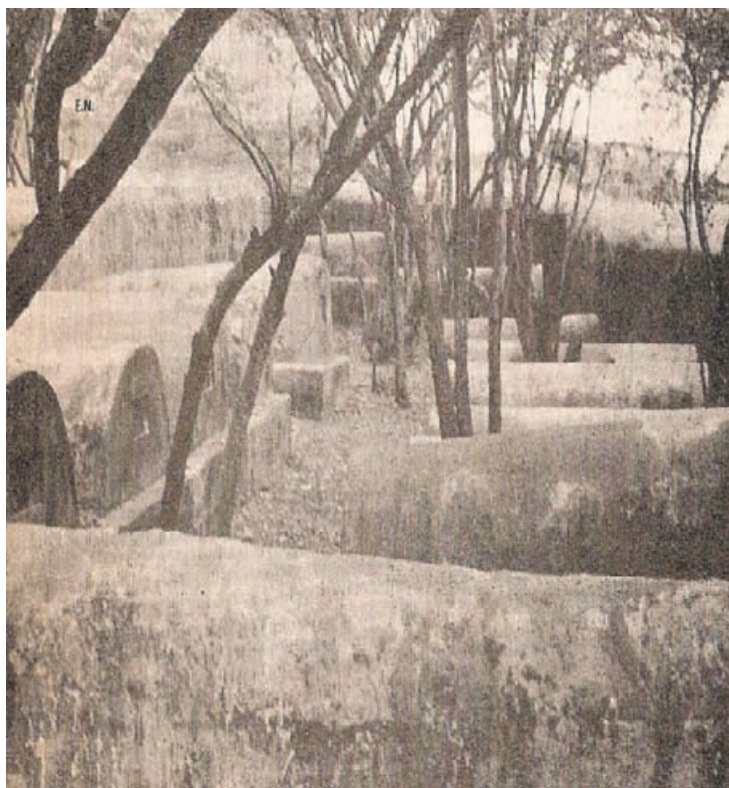
Undisputed evidence of the settlement of white people in Ponton, is the graveyard that denotes the existence of a colonial cemetery. The first to be buried there was the commander - Jan van der Biest Jr. and his family. J. van der Biest Jr. served from 1772 to 1782, and his grave can still be seen today. Unfortunately, the commander's and other copper name plates were stolen by vandals. Imprudently repaired later and since then nobody has been able to identify them. The cemetery itself, both inside and outside the walls, preserves the memory of what was once the residence of Protestant figures from Aruba who defied the Brits that for a while took over the island. Commander Jan Van der Biest Jr. was succeeded by a third Van der Biest, Harmen, brother of Jan Junior, who remained in office until 1791, when he was dismissed for reasons of advanced age. He was followed by

Commander Jacobus Pellicorne Porrier and then Borchard Specht, who, according to historians, was born in Utrecht, the Netherlands and married the commander's Poppe's daughter, Catharina Raders.

A historian who visited Aruba around 1825 mentioned that at that time he could still see the remains of the commander's house in Ponton and that the masonry recess in which the flagpole had been placed was intact. In 1825, prominent people no longer lived there, but there were still limestone houses in the surrounding area where goats and cows were raised.

On a clear day from Ponton, you can distinguish the coastal silhouette of the Paraguaná isthmus with the Santa Ana hill rising up on the other side of the strait that separates Aruba from Venezuela on the South American continent.

If you enjoyed reading our stories and are interested in learning more regarding the true Aruban identity, we recommend you to book a visit to Etnia Nativa—the only "living museum of its kind in the Caribbean"—a fascinating choice, a trend setter since 1994 and co-founders of Islands National Park, Archaeological Museum Aruba and Artisan Foundation among others. We share valuable knowledge and connect you to the ancient island's spirit and soul. WhatsApp +297 592 2702 etnianativa03@gmail.com



Snakes you may encounter on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—If you have ever or will ever go off-roading on the island, you may encounter three types of snakes that are dominant on the island. The Cascabel, Santanero and Boa differ from each other in a couple ways, and local perspective on each one may help you understand what you need to do if you ever were to encounter one during your touring session on the island.

Cascabel (*Crotalus unicolor*)

The small Cascabel or Aruba Island Rattlesnake averages 70 cm in length. The body color is often uniform gray or light brown. There may be a faint pattern of diamond shaped markings on the back. This pattern is most noticeable on younger snakes. The most distinctive feature of this snake is the rattle at the end of its tail which makes a buzzing sound when the snake is alarmed. Cascabels are shy and not aggressive, but their venom can be dangerous to humans. In fact, it's the only venomous snake native to the island. It is best to leave this snake alone. Do not attempt to catch or kill it, as it could not only be dangerous, but this snake is also endemic to the island, and its preservation has become a legal mandate for all residents and visitors.

Cascabels hunt by waiting under bushes and fruiting trees to catch passing lizards, mice, rats, small rabbits, and an occasional bird. This is often considered to be one of the rarest rattle-

snakes in the world. The range of the Cascabel is restricted to the rugged and mountainous areas of the island mostly within Arikok National Park. The Arikok National Park was designated in the early 1980s to include most of the rattlesnake's population, providing a safe refuge in which the snake can be protected and monitored. The government has also implemented outreach and education initiatives to change local perception of the snake and highlight its ecological and economic importance – it is now being promoted as a national symbol. Arikok's partnership with the Toledo zoo has safeguarded the rattlesnake ex-situ and led to a number of research projects collecting critical data on the Cascabel's abundance, life history and habitat requirement to help guide future conservation efforts.

Santanero

The slender Santanero or Aruban Cat-eyed Snake is a small fella, typically less than 50 cm long. This snake is recognizable by the large scales on the top of its head and by its pattern of dark brown bands alternating with light brown bands. The belly is plain white or cream colored without any markings. Native as well to the island, this snake is shy and not aggressive. However, it has enlarged teeth at the back of its mouth and mild venom which is not dangerous to humans, but can paralyze small lizards and frogs. Santaneros are most active at night when they search for food. During the day, they hide under rocks or leaves. They frequently climb trees and cactus. Santaneros eat toads, frogs, insects, and lizards. You may find Santaneros near dams during periods of rainy weather or crossing roads at night. This snake is found island wide. A Santanero in your garden will keep away the unwanted insects. If you encounter a Santanero around your garden, please do not harm this species.

Boa (Boa constrictor)

Boas are Aruba's largest snakes. The longest Boa found on the island was slightly less than 3 m. Newborn Boas average 35 cm. Boas are not venomous but are what is called constrictor



snakes; they kill by wrapping themselves around a prey and suffocating them. The most distinctive feature of a Boa is its pattern of dark brown and tan blotches which become red toward the tail. The belly is white or cream colored with numerous black spots. Boas are excellent climbers and may be found in trees and cactus. Boas also hide in the leaves under bushes waiting to catch prey that pass. Boas catch their prey with their teeth and then constrict it in their coils. The Boa's diet consists of birds, lizards, rats, mice, and rabbits. Large Boas have been known to eat small goats and chickens. When threatened, Boas will hiss loudly.

Boas are a non-native species and are invasive to the island, risking the population of native lizards and birds. The first Boas were reported on the island in 1999. Since that time they have been found across the entire island in all types of habitats. If you ever encounter a Boa, please do not approach it. Instead, please call the Arikok National Park, as they are experienced in handling Boas. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

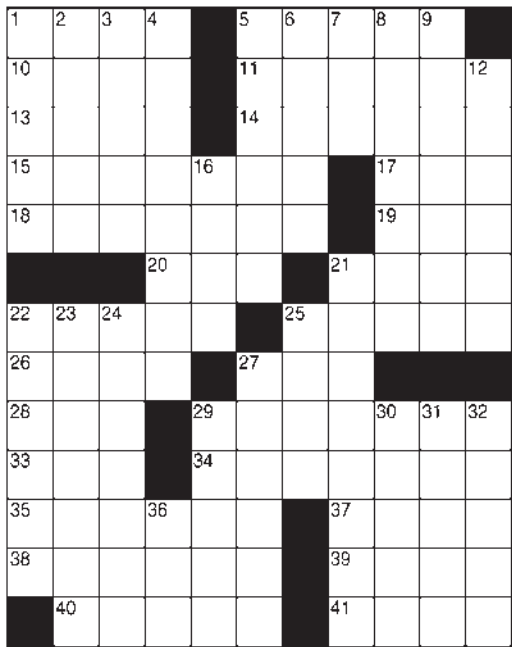
- 39 Bookish sort
5 Snowy bird
10 Pinnacle
11 Vineyard harvest
13 Subsequently
14 Alludes to
15 Brewski
17 Lyricist Gershwin
18 Skilled showoff
19 Illuminated
20 Massive
21 Finished
22 Confectioner's harvest
25 Hair over the forehead
26 Poet Khayyám
27 Cellist's need
28 Work wk. start
29 US/USSR tension
33 Ran into
34 Emergency phone
35 Tolerates
37 Notion
38 Most rational

DOWN

- 1 Gate part
2 Sneeze sound
3 Do refinery work
4 Serves drinks
5 Winter drink
6 Say "hi" to
7 Squealer
8 Letter after delta
9 Ripping
12 Declares
16 Toledo setting
21 Wasting time
22 List separators
23 One-celled creatures
24 Saloon of the Southwest
25 Shackle part
27 Increases
29 Heart's place
30 More broad
31 "... the end of —"
32 Prepared
36 Singer Shannon



Saturday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-4

CRYPTOQUOTE

EV ORRY UEPR FRDAV, EV

GDATROU URDBG, EV XEVURA

RVNLM. — XEFFEDP WFDHR

Saturday's Cryptoquote: ANOTHER BELIEF OF MINE: THAT EVERYONE ELSE MY AGE IS AN ADULT, WHEREAS I AM MERELY IN DISGUISE. — MARGARET ATWOOD

Cruise ship Schedule: December 01 - 08 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
SUN	01	EXPLORER OF THE SEAS - dept. OCEANIA SIRENA FREEWINDS - DEPT.	**** 07.00 ****	18.00 16.00 22.15	C B E	- 1 -
MON	02	BRITANNIA	09.00	18.00	C	1
TUE	03	CARNIVAL VISTA OASIS OF THE SEAS	13.00 08.00	23.00 21.00	C I	1 1
WED	04	EVIRIMA FREEWINDS	08.00 06.00	**** ****	C E	1 1
THU	05	SEABOURN OVATION EVIRIMA - DEPT. AIDALUNA	08.00 **** 08.00	21.00 19.00 18.00	B C I	1 - 1
FRI	06	AZAMARA JOURNEY CARNIVAL LIBERTY	13.00 09.00	22.00 22.00	B C	1 1
SAT	07	NORWEGIAN GEM AIDAPERLA	07.00 10.00	21.00 ****	C I	1 1
SUN	08	CELEBRITY BEYOND NORWEGIAN JEWEL AIDAPERLA - Dept. FREEWINDS - DEPT.	09.00 14.00 **** ****	21.00 21.30 22.00 22.15	B C I E	1 1 - -

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the

safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



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Eagle beach
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Price : \$9000
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Marriott Surf Club

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Platinum season
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Eagle Beach
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For Rent

Renaissance Ocean suites
Private islands
One bedroom sleep 4
Date : 3 January to 17 January 2025
Price : \$ 2000 each week
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Johnnypaesch@gmail.com

La Cabana Beach and Casino

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Price : \$ 2000
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Eagle beach one bedroom
Sleep 4 week # 51 room # 2258
Birdie 10 with 24 weeks remaining
Price : \$ 12,000
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Divi Village

Eagle beach
One bedroom week 52 room # 3308
With 16 weeks remaining on the contract
C- building elevator
Price : \$ 10,000
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Divi Village

Eagle beach
One bedroom week 01 room # 3208
With 11 weeks remaining
C- Building elevator
Price : \$ 8000
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Price : \$ 12,000
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2 Bed Oceanside \$24,000
2 Bed Ocean view \$22,500
2 Bed Garden view \$17,500
3 Bed Ocean view \$34,000
WK 51 Ocean view \$65,000
WK 52 Ocean View \$65,000
WK 7 and 14 - all views

GOLD SEASON

2 Bed Oceanfront \$18,000
2 Bed Oceanside \$14,000
2 Bed Ocean view \$13,500
2 Bed Garden view \$12,000
3 Bed Ocean view \$30,000

Marriott Aruba Ocean Club PLATINUM SEASON

2 Bed Oceanfront \$45,000
2 Bed Ocean view \$29,000
1 Bed Ocean front \$21,000
1 Bed Ocean View \$17,000

GOLD SEASON

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2 Bed Ocean view \$15,000
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1 Bed Ocean View \$11,500

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San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel. 524 8833

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Oranjestad:

Eagle: Tel. 587 9011

San Nicolas:

Centro Medico: Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

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EMERGENCY

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Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
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FAVI- Visually Impaired
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Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

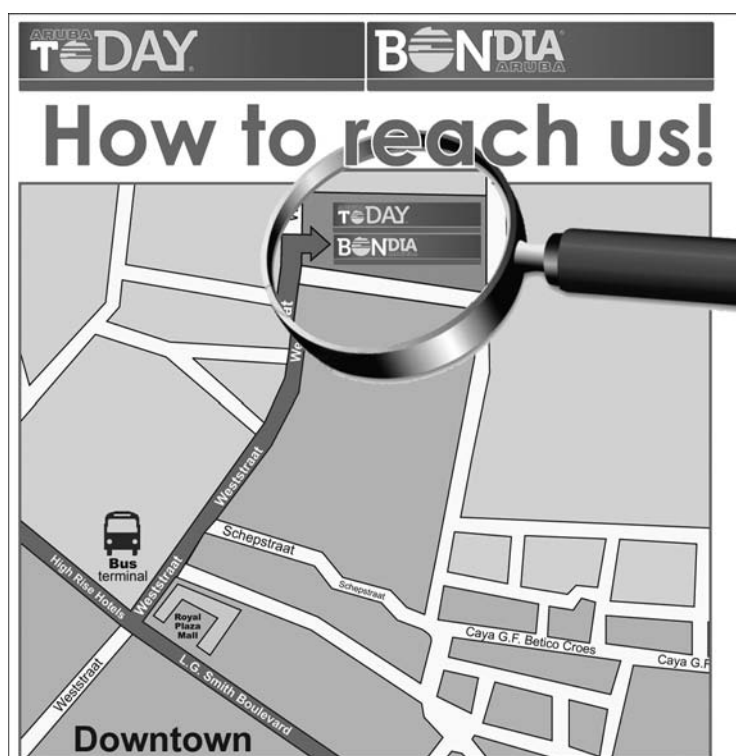
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Chef Bobby Flay looks back at the dishes that made him a star in new cookbook, 'Chapter One'

By MARK KENNEDY
AP Entertainment Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Bobby Flay's latest cookbook is really a sort of recipe for how Bobby Flay was made. The chef, restaurateur and TV personality has compiled 100 of his most important dishes into a lush, beautifully photographed coffee table book he hopes will inspire home cooks. "This is certainly my most important book to me and I think is going to be my most important book to people who consider themselves my readers," Flay says. "Bobby Flay: Chapter One: Iconic Recipes and Inspirations from a Groundbreaking American Chef," has dishes from his restaurants like Mesa Grill, Bolo, Bar Americain and Gato, and his epic runs on "Iron Chef." "Interestingly enough, when I was going through the database of all these thousands of recipes, they popped out at me immediately," he says. Three dishes from Mesa Grill that stayed on its menu from the time the restaurant opened in 1991 to when it closed 26 years later including Shrimp and Roasted Garlic Tamale made the book. As did Steamed Baby Clams with Saffron-Tomato Broth and Scallion Croutons from Bolo and an



This image released by The Food Network shows Bobby Flay during an episode of the cooking series "Beat Bobby Flay: Holiday Throwdown."

"Iron Chef" stunner Curried Fried Chicken with Charred Lime. The book is broken up into just three sections seafood, meat and vegetables with Flay avoiding making a chronology of dishes for fear of confusing readers. All have been updated to reflect today's ingredients and techniques. "What I want people to do is, even though it's this beautiful sort of coffee table book, I do want them to use it either by cooking from it directly or being inspired by it," he says.

"So when somebody says, 'I want to cook fish tonight, I got that Bobby Flay cookbook, let me open to the fish section' that's going to inspire them." Most illuminating are the eight essays Flay wrote that describe a career that has won four Daytime Emmys, multiple James Beard Awards and the honor of cooking a state dinner for President Barack Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Readers will learn that Flay struggled at school al-

though smart, he had a learning disability and a turning point came when he was a temporary busboy leaving his last shift at the restaurant Joe Allen and the chef asked if he wanted a job in the kitchen. "I didn't know that I wanted to cook for a living. I was 17 years old or something. I was just like, 'Well, I don't have anything to do today. I don't know where my friends are, so fine. Like, where do I find an apron?'" Flay, soon turning 60,

learned he had to work with his hands to be inspired and food unlocked something in him. It is, he says, how he shares his love. "I remember waking up one morning a handful of months after I started working, laying in bed, staring at the ceiling. And I'm like, 'I can't wait to go to work today,'" he recalls. "I never felt that feeling before." Flay hit the ground running, soon working for Jonathan Waxman at Bud's, reborn as a red-headed Irish-American New Yorker loving the food of Southwest and Mexico. As he traveled his repertoire grew Spanish, Italian and French. "I am always thrilled to see somebody cooking something interesting. I get inspired by it," he says. "Let's face it: We're watching what everybody else is doing. I mean, you can't just sit in a room and just come up with a brand new cuisine." Flay also became a Food Network star, hosting such shows as "Grillin' & Chillin'" and "Boy Meets Grill" and competition shows like "Bobby's Triple Threat" and "Beat Bobby Flay," which has a new holiday-themed series this year featuring Marcus Samuelsson, Eric Adjepong and Brooke Williamson. □

Think 'brain rot' summed up 2024? Oxford agrees it was the word of the year

LONDON (AP) — Many of us have felt it, and now it's

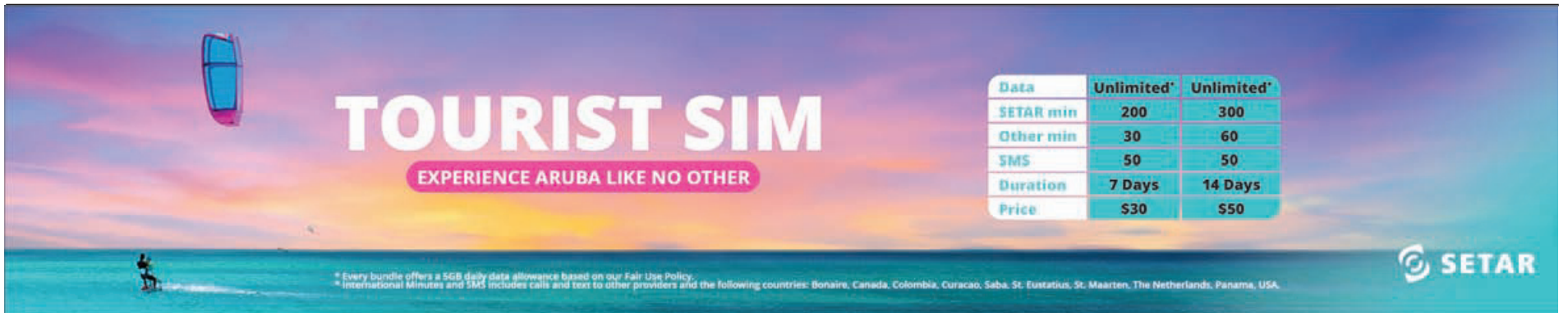


In this Aug. 29, 2010 file photo, an Oxford English Dictionary is shown at the headquarters of the Associated Press in New York. Associated Press

official: "Brain rot" is the Oxford dictionaries' word of the year. Oxford University Press said Monday that the evocative phrase "gained new prominence in 2024," with its frequency of use increasing 230% from the year before. Oxford defines brain rot as "the supposed deterioration of a person's mental or intellectual state, especially viewed as the result of overconsumption of material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging." The word of the year is intended to be "a word or expression that reflects

a defining theme from the past 12 months." "Brain rot" was chosen by a combination of public vote and language analysis by Oxford lexicographers. It beat five other finalists: demure, slop, dynamic pricing, romantasy and lore. While it may seem a modern phenomenon, the first recorded use of "brain rot" was by Henry David Thoreau in his 1854 ode to the natural world, "Walden." Oxford Languages President Casper Grathwohl said that in its modern sense, "'brain rot' speaks to one of the perceived dan-

gers of virtual life, and how we are using our free time." "It feels like a rightful next chapter in the cultural conversation about humanity and technology. It's not surprising that so many voters embraced the term, endorsing it as our choice this year," he said. Last year's Oxford word of the year was "rizz," a riff on charisma, used to describe someone's ability to attract or seduce another person. Collins Dictionary's 2024 word of the year is "brat" the album title that became a summer-living ideal. □



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SETAR

Tiger Woods has no firm answers on a deal with Saudis or his future as a player

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

Tiger Woods could not offer much of a timetable Tuesday on PGA Tour negotiations with the Saudi backers of LIV Golf or his own future as a player.

Woods is the tournament host of the Hero World Challenge this week, and that's his only role at Albany Golf Club in the Bahamas. He has played the holiday tournament only once since 2019, missing this year while recovering from a sixth surgery on his lower back.

"I'm not tournament sharp yet, no. I'm still not there," Woods said. "These are 20 of the best players in the world and I'm not sharp enough to compete against them at this level. So when I'm ready to compete and play at this level, then I will."

A big part of his time is oc-



Tiger Woods watches his son Charlie Woods during the second round of stroke play at the U.S. Junior Amateur Golf Championship on July 23, 2024, in Bloomfield Township, Mich.

Associated Press

cupied by PGA Tour business matters.

Woods was appointed to the PGA Tour board a year

ago with no term limits, and he also is on the board of the commercial PGA Tour Enterprises.

There has been movement on negotiations for the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia to become

a minority investor in PGA Tour Enterprises — the tour already has a \$1.5 billion investment from Strategic Sports Group and a player equity program. PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan played in the Dunhill Links Championship on the European tour with the PIF governor, Yasir Al-Rumayyan.

Monahan also played golf with President-elect Donald Trump, who had said he could fix golf's mess in about 15 minutes.

"I think all of us who have been a part of this process would have thought it would have happened quicker than this," Woods said.

He suggested any deal still would have required Justice Department approval.

"But things are very fluid, we're still working through it, it's happening daily," Woods said. □

Israel Vázquez, the three-time world boxing champion from Mexico, dies at 46

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Israel Vázquez, the Mexican fighter who won three bantamweight world titles, has died at 46.

World Boxing Council president Mauricio Sulaiman announced the death on Tuesday.

The boxer nicknamed "El Magnifico" revealed on Nov. 10 he had sarcoma, a cancer.

"Israel is finally resting in peace. May God provide his family with strength we extend all the support to his wife Laura, his kids, family and friends during this difficult time," Sulaiman said on X. "Thanks champion for leaving a special footprint. You will always be 'El Mag-

nifico.'"

Vázquez debuted in 1995 and will be most remembered for his four fights against countryman Rafael Márquez from 2007-10. They split the series, and the 2007 and 2008 duels received fight of the year awards.

After winning in 2008, Vázquez suffered a detached retina and eventually lost his right eye after his retirement. He stopped fighting in May 2010 after the fourth fight against Marquez, who won by a knockout.

Vázquez won the vacant IBF super bantamweight title in 2004 against Jose Luis Valbuena and suc-

cessfully defended it twice. Then he took the WBC belt from titleholder Oscar Larios with a third-round stoppage in 2005.

He held the WBC belt until the first meeting with Márquez, against whom he retired in the seventh round after struggling to breathe through a broken nose. In a rematch five months later, Vázquez regained the title despite cuts over both eyes, by knocking out Márquez in the sixth round. Vázquez won their third bout in early 2008 by a split decision after being knocked down himself. But the eye injury meant he didn't fight for the rest of the year and was stripped

of the WBC title.

After three surgeries, he was cleared to fight and fought

Márquez a fourth time in Los Angeles and suffered a third-round knockout. □



Referee Pat Russell raises the arm of Israel Vázquez of Mexico after he defeated Rafael Marquez of Mexico in their WBC super bantamweight championship bout, in Carson, Calif., March. 1, 2008.

Associated Press



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Texans' Azeez Al-Shaair suspended 3 games without pay after violent hit on Trevor Lawrence

By **KRISTIE RIEKEN**

AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston's Azeez Al-Shaair was suspended by the NFL without pay for three games Tuesday for repeated violations of player safety rules following his violent hit to the head of Jacksonville's Trevor Lawrence, which led to a concussion.

Al-Shaair's punishment was announced by NFL vice president of football operations Jon Runyan. In his letter to Al-Shaair, Runyan noted that he has had multiple offenses for personal fouls and sportsmanship-related rules violations in recent seasons.

Back in the starting lineup after missing two games with a sprained left shoulder, Lawrence scrambled left on a second-and-7 play in the second quarter of Houston's 23-20 win on Sunday. He initiated a slide before Al-Shaair raised his forearm and unleashed on the defenseless quarterback.

In his letter to Al-Shaair, Runyan called the hit "unacceptable and a serious violation of the playing rules." "Video shows you striking the head/neck area of Jaguars' quarterback Trevor Lawrence after he clearly goes down in a feet-first slide," Runyan wrote. "You led with your forearm and helmet and delivered a forceful blow to the head/neck area of your opponent when you had time and space to avoid such contact." Al-Shaair is appealing the suspension, according to a person with knowledge of the decision. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the appeal is pending.

Houston general manager



Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback Trevor Lawrence (16) is looked at by trainers after a late hit by Houston Texans linebacker Azeez Al-Shaair (0) during the first half of an NFL football game Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024, in Jacksonville, Fla.

Nick Caserio defended Al-Shaair and said he doesn't believe the league is using consistency in issuing punishments like these.

"I probably speak for a lot of teams, not only the Houston Texans, but I think that's all teams ask for is consistency from the league," he said. "And I'd say in this situation, quite frankly, there's no consistency at all relative to the level of discipline that's been handed down."

Caserio pointed to other players who have been ejected for illegal hits this season who have either not been suspended or only suspended for one game. If the suspension is upheld, Al-Shaair won't be eligible to return to Houston's active roster until after the team's Christmas Day game against the Baltimore Ravens. Al-Shaair has a base salary of \$1.5 million this season, meaning it will

cost him about \$265,000 if the three-game suspension is upheld.

Lawrence clenched both fists after the hit movements consistent with what's referred to as the "fencing response," which can be common after a traumatic brain injury. He was on the ground for several minutes as teammates came to his defense and mobbed Al-Shaair in what escalated into a brawl.

As Al-Shaair was leaving the field after being ejected, fans started screaming at him. Jaguars veteran guard Brandon Scherff joined in, prompting another altercation with Al-Shaair. Texans teammate Will Anderson grabbed Al-Shaair and was escorting him off the field when a fan threw a water bottle and hit Anderson in the helmet. The fan was later ejected. Runyan also outlined Al-Shaair's behavior after the

hit in announcing the suspension.

"After the illegal hit, you proceeded to engage in a brawl, which you escalated when you pulled an opponent down to the ground by his facemask," he wrote. "After the referee announced that you were disqualified for the hit and your unsportsmanlike acts, you removed your helmet and reengaged with your opponent while walking down and across the field, which started another physical confrontation near the end zone."

This is the third time this season Al-Shaair has been punished by the league. Last week, he was flagged and later fined \$11,255 for a late hit out of bounds on Titans running back Tony Pollard.

He was fined earlier this year after he punched Bears running back Roschon Johnson on the sideline in

Week 2. That occurred during a scuffle that started after his hard shot on quarterback Caleb Williams near the sideline wasn't flagged. "Your lack of sportsmanship and respect for the game of football and all those who play, coach, and enjoy watching it, is troubling and does not reflect the core values of the NFL," Runyan told Al-Shaair in the letter. "Your continued disregard for NFL playing rules puts the health and safety of both you and your opponents in jeopardy and will not be tolerated."

Caserio was outraged by that part of Runyan's letter. "The most important thing is the health and safety of the players and the health and well being of Trevor and hopefully Trevor is going to be OK," Caserio said. "But to speak on Azeez's intentionality about what he intended to do and some of the comments that have been made quite frankly, it's embarrassing. So we're going to support Azeez. We love everything about him. We're glad he's a part of this team."

Al-Shaair apologized to Lawrence in a long post on X on Monday, where he said he didn't see Lawrence sliding until "it was too late" and that it happened "in the blink of an eye" before saying he was sorry for the hit.

Jaguars coach Doug Pederson said Sunday it was a play that "really has no business being in our league," and said Monday that the team is considering shutting Lawrence down for the season. Former Houston Texans linebacker Denzel Perryman was suspended for three games for repeatedly violating player safety rules last November. □